

MANUAL of

PERMAWOODLANDS

PERMACULTURE DESIGN TO MITIGATE GLOBAL WARMING
WITH THE MIYAWAKI REFORESTATION METHOD

Training Course | KA153-YOU - Mobility of youth workers - 2023-3-IT03-KA153-YOU-000182447

Laconi, Italia | 11-22 novembre 2024

Introduction

PermaWoodlands was born out of the urgent need to tackle two interconnected crises simultaneously: the **eco-climate crisis** and the **social crisis in rural areas**.

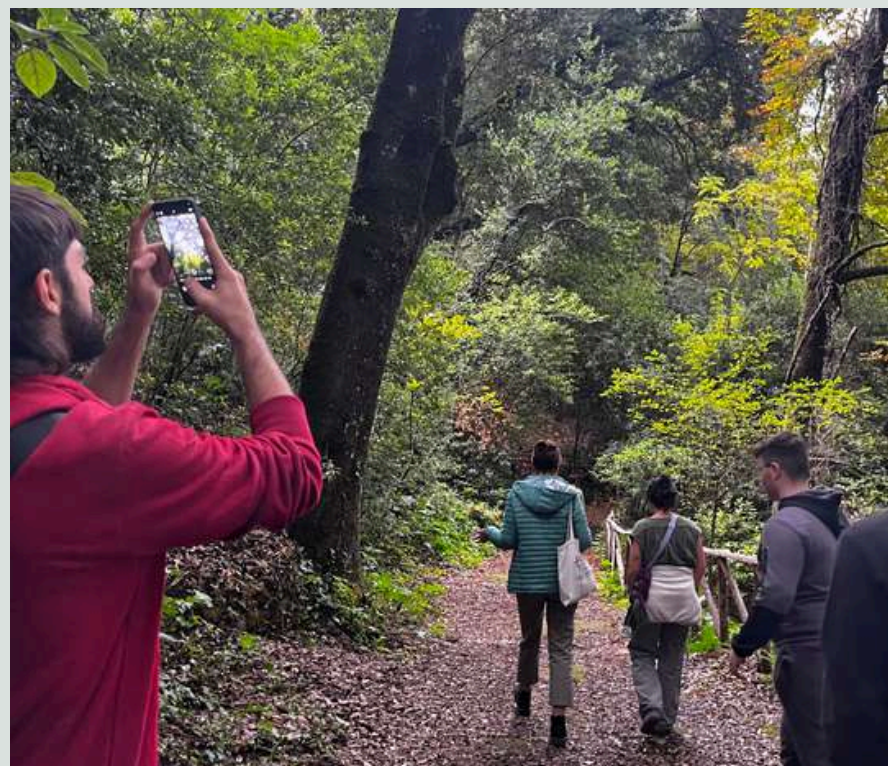
Laconi, a small town in central Sardinia, was chosen as the location to transform a training project into a real-life laboratory, where youth workers from five countries explore, learn, and experiment with concrete methods for regenerating spaces and communities.

The training course combined:

- permaculture, as a systemic vision of living and designing;
- the Miyawaki methodology, to regenerate a disused area;
- nursery self-production, to understand the green supply chain;
- non-formal education, as an approach to activate awareness, cooperation, and responsibility.

During the ten days of work, participants alternated between theory, practical activities, immersion in nature, reflective workshops, and community engagement sessions. The goal was twofold: to provide replicable skills and to create a real impact on the host territory by activating participatory and regenerative processes.





Objectives of the manual



This manual brings together all the activities actually carried out during PermaWoodlands, with a dual purpose:

1. To document the training course, providing a faithful record of the program implemented.
2. To offer replicable tools to youth workers, trainers, associations, and communities who wish to use similar methodologies in their own contexts.

Each activity is described in a narrative-practical way: what was done, how it was facilitated, what pedagogical objectives were pursued and what materials are needed.





Methodological approach



Non-formal education

The activities were designed according to the pillars of **non-formal learning**: active participation, reflection, cooperation, self-expression, and the centrality of experience.

The Council of the European Union defines socio-educational activities as a safe, inclusive space geared towards the voluntary participation of young people, promoting active citizenship, creativity, and intercultural dialogue. PermaWoodlands has adopted this perspective in every aspect of its work.

Permaculture

Permaculture was introduced as a **design methodology** and as a lens through which to interpret the territory. Its principles were integrated into activities involving observation, soil analysis, space design, and community relations.

Miyawaki Method

A significant part of the training involved the preparation, design, and creation of a **Miyawaki mini-forest** in the area of Parco delle Magnolie, in collaboration with the Municipality of Laconi.

Community Engagement

Participants collaborated with **local schools, associations, public bodies, and citizens**, carrying out intergenerational, educational, and participatory activities.

DAY 0 | Arrival Day

Arrival of participants and informal welcome

Description

Participants arrived throughout the day, using public transport from major Italian cities or a private car service for groups arriving in the evening. After dinner, a brief informal welcome activity was held to begin creating an atmosphere of trust and familiarity within the group.

Educational objectives

- Facilitate positive initial contact between participants.
- Reduce travel tension and promote a smooth transition into the training context.
- Prepare the ground for group cohesion in the following days.

Methods

Informal welcome, small talk led by facilitators, spontaneous mini icebreakers.

Duration

Variable depending on arrival time.

Materials

None specific



DAY 1 | Group dynamics

Group Building icebreaking & Talent sharing



Description

The first day was dedicated to team building through energizers led by the participants, **activities to get to know each other, and initial exploration of the area**. In the afternoon, a reflective walk in the village of Laconi introduced the local context and stimulated deep conversations. The day ended with the first reflection groups and an informal welcome party.

Educational objectives

- Activate body and mind to facilitate entry into the training program.
- Promote mutual understanding through playful and symbolic dynamics.
- Create a climate of openness, trust, and security within the group.
- Explain the training framework and define a shared pedagogical agreement.
- Value individual talents and skills as a collective resource.
- Facilitate an initial exploration of the host territory and its significance in the project.
- Strengthen cohesion through moments of reflection and informal interaction.

Methods

- Icebreaking and name games
- Physical and rhythmic energizers
- Symbolic presentation with natural objects
- Collaborative games
- Visual facilitation and brainstorming
- Speed networking and skill sharing
- Reflective walk & talk
- Reflection groups
- Informal socialization dynamics

Educational objectives

- To understand the complexity of climate systems.
- To work on the collective construction of knowledge.
- **To stimulate systemic thinking.**

Methods

Card sorting, cooperative problem solving, visual thinking.

Duration

Around 1,5h-2h

Materials

Cards, post-it, colors&pens, flipchart, tape

[→ Find the cards here](#)

DAY 2 | Climate education, nature connection & embodiment

Description

Structured activity to understand and organize the causes, effects, and solutions related to climate change. The cards contained complex concepts (CO₂ emissions, biodiversity loss, adaptation strategies, etc.). The participants, divided into groups, had to connect the cards to create a visual map of **cause-effect** relationships and **solutions and personal action** to do.

Climate Wall

DAY 2 | Climate education, nature connection & embodiment

Environmental issues

Description

Discussion structured in concentric circles: four inner chairs for speakers, outer circle for observers.

Dynamic seating allows for a balanced flow of voices.

Educational objectives

- Analyze current environmental issues.
- Enhance active listening and nonviolent communication.
- Encourage diversity of opinion and rotation of roles

Methods

Fishbowl, guiding questions, facilitated dialogue.

Duration

Around 1h

Materials

Questions to start/lead the discussion





DAY 2 | Climate education, nature connection & embodiment

Nature Connection

Description

Immersive activity inspired by native traditions. Each participant received an envelope with six messages to follow independently: intuitive search for a natural place, observation of patterns, deep listening, relationship with an “allied place.”

Educational objectives

- To foster an empathetic connection with the environment.
- To develop natural observation skills.
- To prepare internally for the regeneration project.

Methods

Walking meditation, sensory listening, journaling.

Duration

Around 2h

Materials

Sheet with steps to follow

[→ Find material here](#)

DAY 2 | Climate education, nature connection & embodiment

Embodiment Activities

Description

A sequence of physical exercises to focus attention on breathing, slow movement, and sensations. The group moved from individual exercises to synchronized collective movements.

+ Bonus: Movie Night – Inhabit: A Permaculture Perspective

Educational objectives

- Improve physical presence.
- Facilitate cohesion through the body.
- Promote integrated learning (mind–body–environment).

Methods

Grounding, somatic awareness, movement exploration.

Duration

Around 2h

Materials

Sheet with steps to follow



DAY 3 | Introduction to permaculture & field observation

Permaculture Introduction

Description

Facilitated session introducing the fundamental principles of permaculture:

- ethics (Earth Care, People Care, Fair Share)
- design principles
- reading natural flows
- observation as a primary tool

The facilitation used simple examples, narrative diagrams, and images taken from the surrounding area.

Educational objectives

- To understand permaculture as a systemic design methodology.
- To connect theory and local context.
- To lay the foundations for the following day's fieldwork.

Methods

Storytelling, guiding questions, visual analogies.

Duration

Around 1,5h

Materials

Various materials that you consider useful for this purpose

→ [Find permaculture principles cards here](#)





DAY 3 | Introduction to permaculture & field observation

Permaculture Group Activities

Methods

Storytelling, guiding questions, visual analogies.

Materials

Cooperation in small groups, use of concept maps, maps.

Description

Participants, divided into small groups, tackled **micro-design exercises inspired by permaculture principles**, such as analyzing the needs of a system, identifying relationships between elements, low-complexity design simulations.

Educational objectives

- Apply concepts introduced in the previous session in a practical way.
- Promote cooperative work.
- Strengthen the ability to think in terms of ecosystems.

DAY 3 | Introduction to permaculture & field observation

Permaculture Tools for Observation

Description

Introduction to practical tools for observing the territory:

- reading water (runoff, retention points)
- visual soil analysis
- landscape patterns
- sun exposure
- presence of biodiversity

Educational objectives

- Provide concrete tools for ecological analysis.
- Increase awareness of natural dynamics.
- Prepare for field observation.

Methods

Practical demonstration, use of maps and photographs.

Duration

Around 1,5h

Materials

Online tools



DAY 3 | Introduction to permaculture & field observation

Observation Practice

Description

Experiential observation activity in the selected area.

Participants noted:

- microclimates
- soil texture
- wind patterns
- ecological health indicators
- possible critical points or opportunities

Educational objectives

- Apply observation tools in a real environment.
- Promote a scientific approach combined with sensory experience.
- Prepare the Miyawaki design phases.

Methods

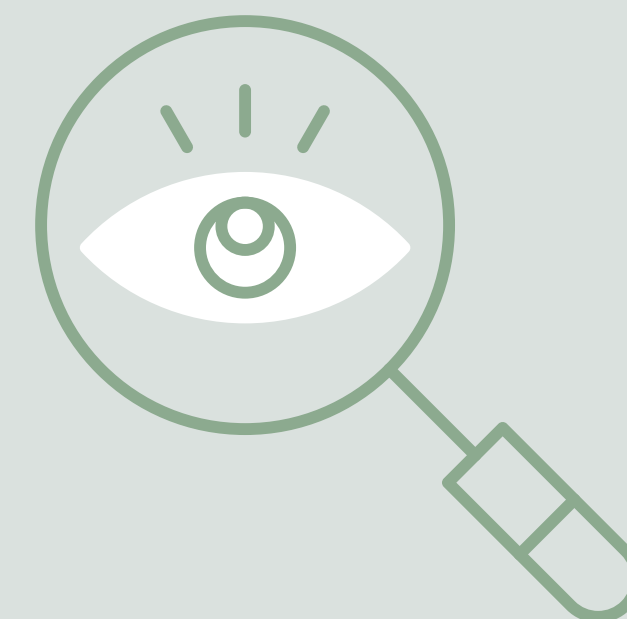
Field journaling, sensory observation, small group discussion.

Duration

Around 1,5h

Materials

Paper, pens, app for recognizing flora



DAY 4 | Miyawaki method, forest bathing & design

Miyawaki Method

Description

Theoretical and practical insights into:

- principles of the Miyawaki method
- species density and stratification
- soil preparation
- forest growth stages
- role of biodiversity

Includes a special focus on native Sardinian species and their resilience.

Educational objectives

- Provide a solid understanding of the method.
- Understand the differences between the Miyawaki approach and traditional reforestation.
- Prepare for the design

Methods

Interactive lessons, demonstrations, practical examples.

Duration

Around 1,5h

Materials

→ Presentation here



DAY 4 | Miyawaki method, forest bathing & design

Design Group Activity

Description

Work in groups to define:

- species placement
- plant density
- organization of field work
- division of roles for the following days

Educational objectives

- Transform theory into operational design.
- Promote distributed leadership.
- Prepare a forest consistent with Miyawaki principles.

Methods

Co-design, observation, technical discussion.

Duration

Around 1,5h

Materials

Maps of the area, tracing paper

DAY 4 | Miyawaki method, forest bathing & design

Forest Bathing

Description

Immersive activity **inspired by shinrin-yoku.**

The group walked slowly through the woods at a calm pace, focusing on:

- deep breathing
- observing the micro-world
- listening to natural sounds
- perceiving light and shadows

Educational objectives

- Promote mental and physical well-being.
- Stimulate sensory perception and connection with the place.
- Prepare for ecological design based on listening to the environment.

Methods

Guided meditation, mindful walking.

Duration

Around 2h

Materials

A professional to guide the practice





DAY 4 | Miyawaki method, forest bathing & design

Wild Harvesting

Educational objectives

- Introduce the concept of sustainable harvesting.
- Strengthen the material connection with the territory.

Methods

- Experiential Learning
- Reflection-in-Action
- Peer Learning
- Place-Based Learning

Duration Around 2h

Materials

Gardening gloves, shears, baskets

Description

Practical activity involving the **responsible collection of natural elements** for future symbolic activities and for self-observation of the territory.

DAY 4 | Miyawaki method, forest bathing & design

Full Moon Night

Description

The Full Moon Night was a **collective ritual designed to symbolically release personal or emotional blocks**. In a quiet outdoor space under the full moon, participants sat in a circle and took a few minutes of silence to reflect on something they wished to let go of. Each person wrote a word, feeling, or situation on a small piece of paper. One by one, participants approached a safely prepared small fire and dropped their paper into the flames, observing the burning as a moment of release and transformation. The activity ended with a brief closing circle, where those who wished could share a feeling, gratitude, or intention.

Educational objectives

- Support emotional release and personal reflection.
- Strengthen group cohesion and trust.
- Create a safe, symbolic space for inner processing.

Methods

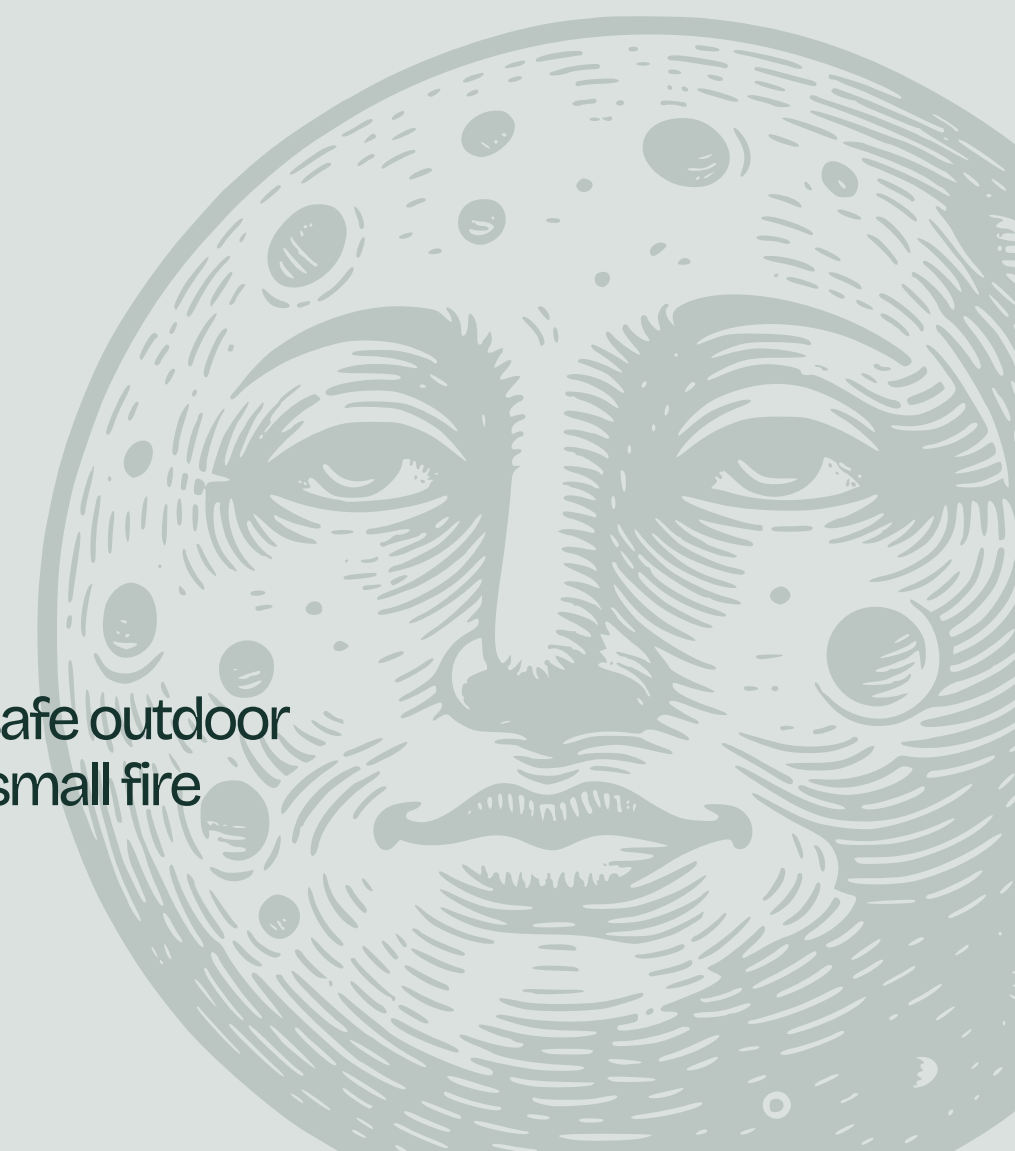
- Experiential learning
- Guided reflection
- Circle practice

Duration

Around 2h

Materials

Small pieces of paper, pens, safe outdoor space, fireproof container or small fire setup, lighter or matches





DAY 5 | Nursery creation, mid-term evaluation & kids workshops prep

Plant Nursery Creation & Care

Description

Guided by a Forestas nursery specialist, participants **learned basic seed selection, sowing techniques, germination needs**, and hygiene practices to prevent pathogens. Everyone planted a seedling that, once grown, will be added to the mini forest.

Educational objectives

- Learn basic nursery creation and seedling care.
- Strengthen teamwork through shared manual work.

Methods

Experiential learning, Learning by doing

Duration

Around 1,5h

Materials

Soil and seeds

DAY 5 | Nursery creation, mid-term evaluation & kids workshops prep

Preparation of Activities for Kids

Description

Working in groups, they prepared clear steps, safe materials, and age-appropriate facilitation methods. The workshops included:

1. **Seed Balls** – making small clay–soil–seed spheres to teach natural propagation and reforestation.
2. **Climate Wall for Kids** – a simplified cause–effect matching game using illustrated cards to show how human actions impact the environment.
3. **Nature Collage** – creating shapes or scenes using natural elements (leaves, seeds, twigs) to encourage creativity and sensory connection with nature.

Educational objectives

- Create easy, replicable environmental education activities for children.
- Teach basic concepts of regeneration, climate impact, and nature connection.
- Strengthen teamwork and creative planning among participants.

Methods

- Cooperative group design
- Learning by creating

Duration

Around 1,5h

Materials

Clay, soil, seeds
Illustrated Climate Wall cards
Natural elements (leaves, twigs, seeds)
Basic crafting materials (trays, containers)





DAY 5 | Nursery creation, mid-term evaluation & kids workshops prep

Sunset Walk

Description

A **reflective walk organised to decompress** after an intense day. The group followed a panoramic trail in the late afternoon, walking slowly and mindfully while observing sounds, light changes, and landscape details. At the viewpoint, participants paused to watch the sunset and take a moment for personal reflection or journaling. The return walk was quieter and more grounded, reinforcing connection with the place and the group.

Educational objectives

- Support emotional and physical decompression.
- Strengthen connection with the natural environment.
- Provide space for informal sharing and personal reflection.

Methods

- Mindful walking
- Guided reflection

Duration Around 1,5h

Materials

Comfortable shoes and notebooks

DAY 5 | Nursery creation, mid-term evaluation & kids workshops prep

Mid-term Evaluation

Description

The mid-term evaluation was conducted halfway through the training to gather immediate feedback on key aspects of the project. Participants completed a pie chart rating **five areas: logistics, accommodation, activities, facilitation, and food, allowing a clear visual overview of satisfaction levels.**

A short discussion followed, giving space for qualitative comments and suggestions. This process supported transparency, active participation, and better alignment between group needs and the ongoing organisation.

Educational objectives

- Assess participant satisfaction at the project's midpoint.
- Identify strengths and areas needing improvement.
- Foster open communication and shared responsibility.

Methods

- Visual feedback tools
- Individual reflection
- Group discussion
- Participatory evaluation

Duration

Around 1,5h

Materials

Pie chart template
Pens / markers



DAY 6 | Nature pulse walk

Nature Pulse Walk

Description

One participant guided another along a path, making them walk with their eyes closed for a few minutes. Then they took turns being the guide.

This activity required **mutual trust and intensified the relationship with the local landscape**. During the walk, they touched natural surfaces (logs, stones, leaves), listened to sounds, and felt the variations in the ground beneath their feet.

Educational objectives

- To strengthen trust and cooperation within the group.
- To intensify sensory perception.
- To train presence and listening to the environment.

Methods

Walk & trust, sensory awareness, pair work.

Duration

all day

Materials

Comfortable shoes and notebooks



DAY 7 | Preparation for Miyawaki forest

Material & Soil Preparation

Description

The group **checked tools and resources, assigned roles, and organised work areas.** Participants loosened and aerated the soil, removed stones and compacted layers, and mixed organic matter and compost to improve fertility and moisture retention. Meanwhile, others prepared buckets, species markers, mulch stations, and plant distribution points. Observations from previous days (light exposure, moisture differences, soil quality, wind direction) were applied to guide decisions. The activity ended with a collective check to ensure the site was fully ready for planting.

Educational objectives

- Prepare the soil according to Miyawaki principles.
- Organise tools, roles, and workflow efficiently.
- Apply field observations to practical ecological work.

Methods

- Experiential learning
- Task-based cooperative work
- Learning by doing
- Peer coordination

Duration

Around 2h

Materials

Shovels, wheelbarrows, buckets
Compost, organic matter, mulch
Species markers
Safety equipment



DAY 7 | Preparation for Miyawaki forest

Final Definition of Forest Design

Description

Participants reviewed all field data: sun exposure, soil quality, limiting factors, sectors, water and wind flows, to ensure the design matched real site conditions.

Each group presented its proposal, and through collective comparison, a single shared design was created.

The final plan detailed the placement of more than 200 plants (trees, shrubs, understory species), species ratios, density zones, technical pathways, and biodiversity strategies. The agreed design was then drawn on a clear map to guide the planting phase.

Educational objectives

- Synthesize all ecological and design inputs into one coherent plan.
- Ensure the final layout reflects real site conditions.
- Strengthen collaborative decision-making and ecological reasoning.

Methods

- Cooperative design
- Group presentation and peer feedback
- Collective decision-making
- Pattern-based reasoning (permaculture approach)

Duration

Around 1,5h

Materials

Maps and site notes
Pens/markers
Species lists
Draft design sheets





DAY 7 | Bonus

Description

Evening cultural activity in which participants learned the basic steps of ballu tundu, a traditional Sardinian dance and sharing their own culture

Learning Traditional Sardinian Dance



DAY 8 | Miyawaki collective planting action

Planting Action

Description

This was the project's culminating collective action, **involving participants, local community members, and a team from the Forestas agency**. The day began with organising tools, preparing the site, and forming work groups. Participants planted according to the final design, respecting density, stratification, and species diversity.

Participants, locals, and Forestas worked side by side until all plants were successfully placed, completing the forest within the planned timeframe.

Educational objectives

- Transform the shared design into concrete ecological action.
- Strengthen cooperation between participants and community
- Learn practical Miyawaki planting techniques in real conditions.

Methods

Experiential learning, Cooperative action, Learning by doing, Community engagement, Task-based teamwork

Duration all day

Materials

Shovels, buckets, mulch, safety equipment
site map and planting layout

DAY 8| Miyawaki collective planting action

Intercultural party with locals

Description

The Intercultural Party was organized as a community gathering to **connect international participants with locals**. The event was set up collaboratively, with shared tables, simple decorations, and traditional dishes prepared both by participants and local families. The evening included food exchange, informal conversations, short performances (songs, dances, cultural presentations), and local stories and music. The atmosphere was warm, inclusive, and spontaneous, creating a genuine cultural exchange and a strong sense of temporary community.

Educational objectives

- Foster intercultural exchange and community bonding.
- Create an informal, welcoming space for shared traditions.
- Strengthen connections between participants and the local territory.

Methods

- Experiential learning through cultural exchange
- Peer-to-peer sharing (traditions, food, stories)
- Informal learning in a community environment
- Participatory event co-creation

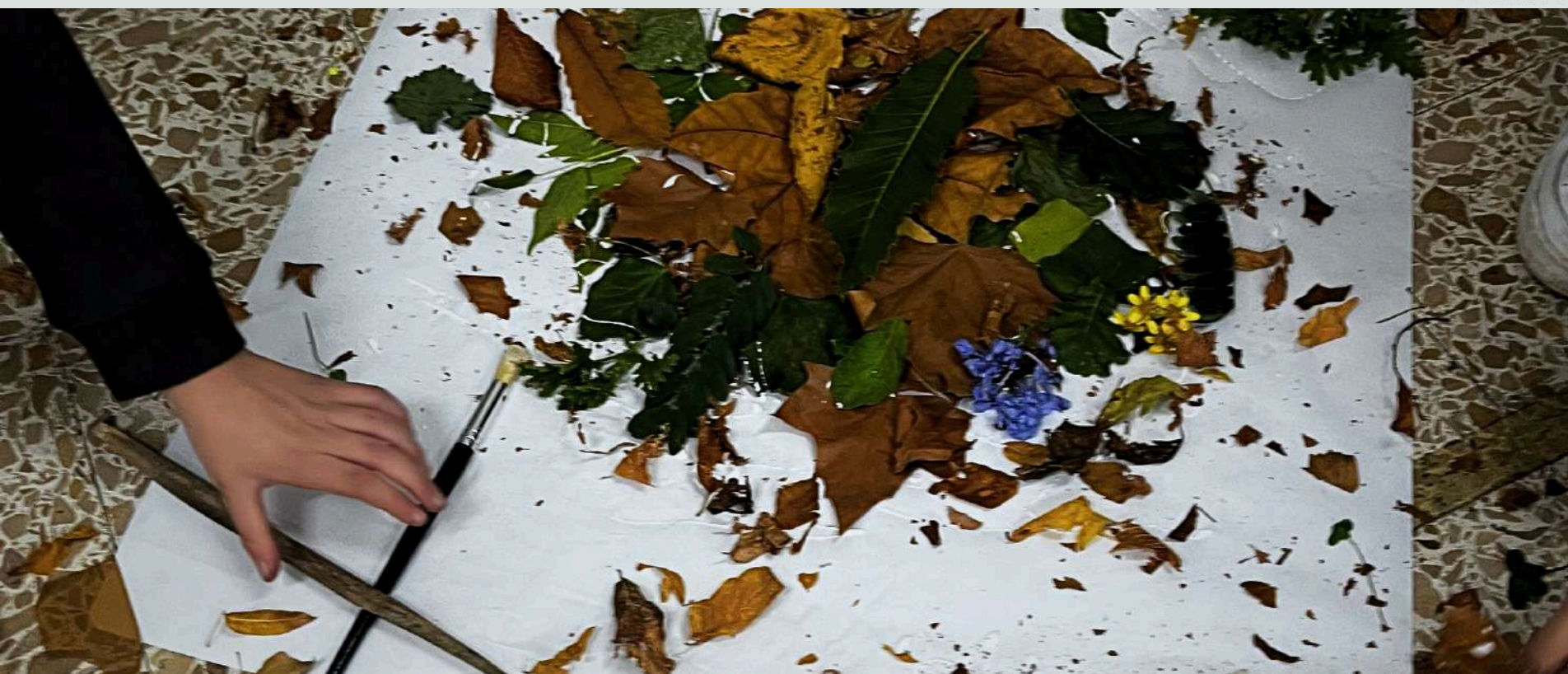
Duration

Evening

Materials

Shared tables and basic decorations
Traditional food (from participants and locals)
Music and simple performance space





DAY 9| Kids workshops, spread the green & community celebration

Action with Kids

Description

Participants finally met with children from Laconi's primary and middle schools to **introduce nature, regeneration, and creativity through simple hands-on activities**. Due to rain, part of the session took place indoors, but the energy of the children and the flexibility of facilitators kept the atmosphere playful and engaging.

Educational objectives

- Introduce children to nature and environmental responsibility.
- Strengthen ties between participants and the local community.

Methods

Experiential learning, Cooperative games, Creative expression, Peer learning between adults and children

Duration

All the morning

Materials

Clay, soil, seeds
Simplified Climate Wall cards
Natural elements for collage
Basic crafting supplies

DAY 9| Kids workshops, spread the green & community celebration

Spread the green

Description

Participants were introduced to the idea of creating a website to **collect and share reforestation best practices**, based on what was learned during the project: reports, photos, activities, and personal testimonies.

After identifying the main sections in plenary, participants worked in groups to decide which content, resources, and information should be included. The session aimed to turn the project's experience into an accessible online tool for future youth workers and communities.

→ [PermaWoodlans web page](#)

Educational objectives

- Exchange best practices on non-formal environmental education.
- Prepare a collection of activities as a manual for youth workers.
- Inspire civic engagement in environmental protection.
- Promote Erasmus+ as a driver for ecological education and cooperation.

Methods

- Collaborative co-design
- Group work and shared decision-making
- Peer learning
- Visual and content mapping

Duration Around 1,5h

Materials

Paper, markers, laptops (optional for drafting)
Draft structure and notes from previous sessions

DAY 9| Kids workshops, spread the green & community celebration

Plant greenery

Description

This session focused on how participants would “plant new seeds” in their home countries by transforming what they learned into concrete actions. Each participant identified realistic **dissemination activities**: workshops, school presentations, youth sessions, community events, or small environmental projects inspired by Miyawaki and permaculture.

They defined target groups, formats, timelines, needed resources, and the role of their organisation in supporting the process. The group also ensured coherence between planned actions and the project’s learning outcomes, aiming for long-term impact.

Educational objectives

- Plan concrete dissemination actions after the project
- Connect personal learning to local community impact
- Strengthen organisational support for follow-up initiatives.

Methods

- Individual reflection and action planning
- Cooperative discussion
- Goal-setting and commitment making
- Peer feedback

Duration

Around 1h

Materials

- Paper or templates for action plans
- Pens
- Project notes and learning outcomes

DAY 10| Youthpass, final evaluation & closing ceremony

Steps to Erasmus+ Voyage

Description

A dynamic peer-education **activity designed to explore Erasmus+ opportunities through creative performance.** Participants were divided into four groups, each receiving a short task sheet, an illustrated “scene” (talk show, school class, NGO office, airplane crew), and a specific section of the Erasmus+ Programme Guide. Each group transformed their section into a short theatrical sketch, defining roles, simple props, and key messages. The performances created a playful “Erasmus+ journey,” helping the group understand complex information in an engaging, collaborative way, followed by a final discussion and Q&A.

Educational objectives

- Learn about Erasmus+ opportunities for young people and youth workers.
- Encourage active participation and creativity.
- Promote discussion and peer learning.
- Simplify complex programme information through theatre.

Methods

- Peer education
- Creative dramatization
- Cooperative group work
- Learning by creating

Duration

Around 1h

Materials

Task sheets

Erasmus+ Programme Guide excerpts

→ [Find here the activity link](#)



DAY 10| Youthpass, final evaluation & closing ceremony

Youthpass



Description

This activity guided participants in reflecting on the competences developed during the project by **linking the 9 Youthpass competences for YW with the 12 permaculture principles**. Using a structured worksheet, participants first worked individually to match each competence with a relevant permaculture principle. They then wrote concrete examples of how these competences had emerged during the project and which ecological principles had supported their learning. The session closed with voluntary sharing, highlighting meaningful connections between youth work and permaculture as complementary frameworks for personal and professional growth.

Educational objectives

- Support clear, meaningful reflection on Youthpass competences.
- Connect ecological principles with youth work practice.
- Strengthen awareness of individual learning processes.

Methods

- Guided individual reflection
- Concept mapping (competence ↔ principle)
- Peer sharing
- Experiential learning integration

Duration

Around 1,5h

Materials

Structured Youthpass–Permaculture worksheet
Pens

→ [Find here the permaculture/competence paper](#)

DAY 10| Youthpass, final evaluation & closing ceremony

Final Evaluation

Description

They were free to walk, sit, or choose a meaningful spot while responding to guiding questions on Padlet about **their learning, emotions, and overall experience**. After this individual phase, the group gathered for a collective closing.

The session ended with a structured **Google Form evaluation** covering organisation, content, facilitation, personal impact, and activity quality, ensuring a complete and thoughtful project closure.

Educational objectives

- Support deep personal reflection on the entire project
- Strengthen group cohesion through appreciation and symbolic gestures.
- Collect structured feedback for future improvements.

Methods

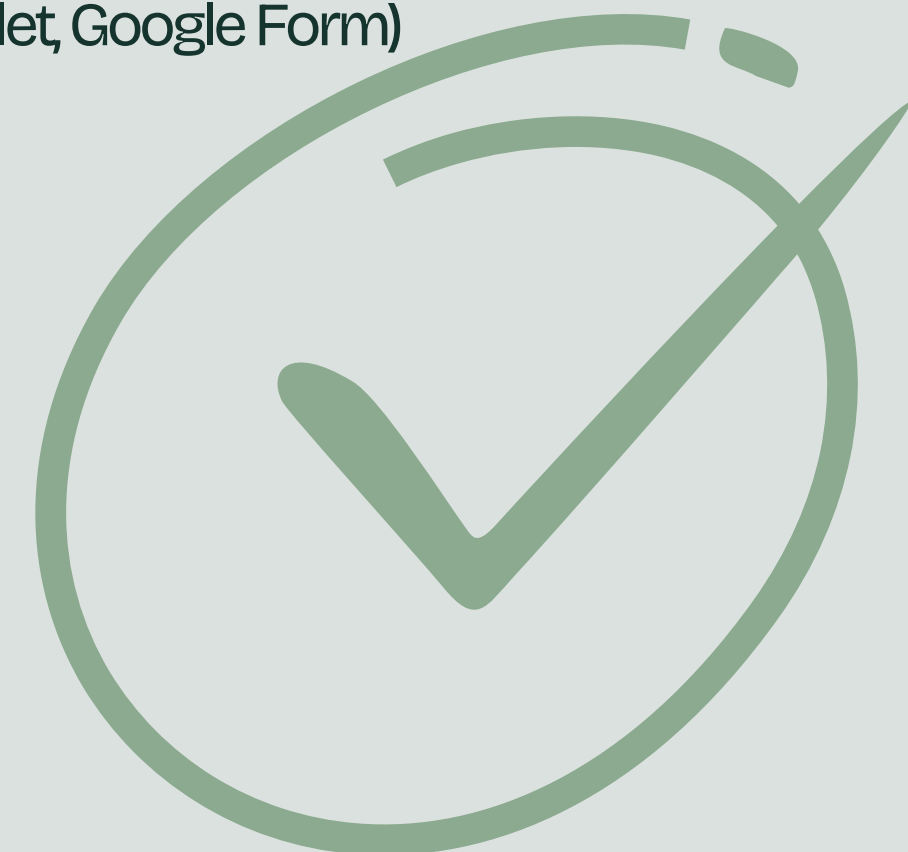
- Individual guided reflection
- Appreciative circle
- Symbolic ritual
- Digital feedback tools (Padlet, Google Form)

Duration

Around 1h

Materials

Padlet reflection questions
Google Form evaluation



DAY 10| Youthpass, final evaluation & closing ceremony

Closing activity

Description

The Closing Activity was a collective **moment of gratitude and celebration**, designed to symbolically close the project and honour the shared journey. In a circle, facilitators introduced the importance of closing rituals in non-formal learning.

A “Love Shower” followed: each participant stepped into the centre while others expressed appreciation, gratitude, and positive qualities. A short symbolic ritual closed the session, with the group joining hands or holding eye contact in silence, followed by optional final reflections. This created a meaningful and emotionally rich ending to the shared experience.

Educational objectives

- Provide symbolic closure to the project.
- Strengthen group bonds and mutual appreciation.
- Support emotional integration of the learning journey.

Methods

- Appreciative circle (“Love Shower”)
- Symbolic ritual
- Group reflection
- Non-formal closing ritual practice

Duration

How much is needed

Materials

Quiet space arranged in a circle
Optional symbolic objects (none required)



Thank You



Contact

info@giovaniddocca.it
www.giovaniddocca.it

instagram: [giovani_iddocca](#)
facebook: [Giovani Iddocca](#)